

# STRENGTHENING CALIFORNIA'S MIDDLE CLASS

STRATEGIES AND PROJECTS BEING IMPLEMENTED BY CALIFORNIA'S  
LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS



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## OVERVIEW: CALIFORNIA'S LOCAL WORKFORCE DEVELOPMENT BOARDS AND STRENGTHENING THE MIDDLE CLASS

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### **LWDBs Implementing Strategies Aimed at Strengthening California's Middle Class**

Over the past decade, both the California State Legislature and Governor's Office have expressed concern about income and wage inequality in the state and low wage workforces. Legislative hearings and policy think-tank conferences have been held on the working poor and on the need to strengthen California's middle class. According to the UC Berkeley Labor Center, one out of every three Californians earn less than two-thirds of the median full-time wage in California. According to the Labor Center's research, wage inequality has only continued to grow, meanwhile wages in the bottom of the wage distribution stagnated over the last 50 years (adjusting for inflation).<sup>1</sup>

Policy recommendations to support low-wage workers and close the wage gap are broad, ambitious, and varied. The USC Dornsife Program for Environmental and Regional Equity released "A 12-step program for Innovation and Inclusion in the California Economy" in 2018<sup>2</sup> In 2019, the Governor's Future of Work Commission was tasked with developing a social compact for California workers, including methods of promoting better job quality, wages and working conditions through technology.<sup>3</sup>

At the same time, California's 45 Local Workforce Development Boards (LWDBs)—quietly and with little attention--have been implementing and testing approaches to strengthen the economic position, wages and mobility opportunities of California's low wage workers. In a series of Policy Alerts in 2020, the California Workforce Association (CWA), the association of the 45 LWDBs, will be highlighting these approaches.

This first Policy Alert of 2020 provides an overview of these approaches. All of these approaches are connected to tenets of job quality. They take a variety of forms because there is no single approach that covers the vast differences in the California economy between regional economies, industry sectors, and occupations. However, each example highlighted focuses on creating opportunity in local communities, generating sufficient

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<sup>1</sup> Perry, Ian Eve. "Low-Wage Work in California." Center for Labor Research and Education, 2018, [laborcenter.berkeley.edu/low-wage-work-in-california/#the-numbers](http://laborcenter.berkeley.edu/low-wage-work-in-california/#the-numbers).

<sup>2</sup> Pastor, M., Benner, C., Sharma, A., Muna, E., Rosenquist, S. and Carter, V. (2018). From Resistance to Renewal > PERE > USC Dana and David Dornsife College of Letters, Arts and Sciences. [online] [Dornsife.usc.edu](https://dornsife.usc.edu/per/california-economy). Available at: <https://dornsife.usc.edu/per/california-economy> [Accessed 25 Feb. 2020].

<sup>3</sup> California, State of. "Future of Work Commission." LWDA. Accessed February 25, 2020. <https://www.labor.ca.gov/labor-and-workforce-development-agency/fowc/>.

wages for decent food and shelter for a worker's family and health, as well as providing predictability in family life and dignity in the workplace.

The LWDB approaches that we will briefly outline in this Policy Alert include the following topics, which aimed at strengthening California's middle class:

1. Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship projects
2. Projects to help retail and hospitality workers obtain more predictable and structured work schedules
3. Projects with self-sufficiency wages for training providers to obtain workforce funds
4. Projects to protect the rights of workers seeking on-demand work, and to ensure protections, pathways and control for those who need irregular work
5. Projects to professionalize and impact the wages/mobility in traditionally lower wage jobs, including in Early Childhood Education and Child Care, Long Term Care facilities, and Community Healthcare

## PART I: HOW CALIFORNIA'S LOCAL WORKFORCE SYSTEM BUILDS ON STATE STRATEGIES TO STRENGTHEN THE MIDDLE CLASS

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Income and wage inequality has been growing in California since the late 1970s.<sup>4</sup> During the past few years, with California's strong economy and tightening labor markets, the wages of lower-wage workers have actually been increasing at greater rates than those of middle and upper wage workers.<sup>5</sup> However, these increases have only begun to make a dent in the absolute differences between income quintiles that have developed over the past forty years.<sup>6</sup>

The state legislature and Governor have moved in the past five years to improve the wages and economic position of lower wage workforces in several direct ways. Chief among these have been the minimum wage increases and expansion of the state Earned Income Tax Credit and a mix of childcare and health care direct subsidies.



California State Capitol Building

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<sup>4</sup> Jaison Abel, "Why Are Some Places So Much More Unequal Than Others", Federal Reserve Bank of New York, New York, December 2019, [https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/epr/2019/epr\\_2019\\_wage-inequality\\_abel-deitz.pdf](https://www.newyorkfed.org/medialibrary/media/research/epr/2019/epr_2019_wage-inequality_abel-deitz.pdf);

*For an earlier analysis of growing income inequality in California since the 1970s, see Deborah Reed, Melissa Haber, "Income Inequality in the Golden State," Public Policy Institute of California, San Francisco, California, 1996, <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/income-inequality-significantly-increased-for-californians-in-2018/>.*

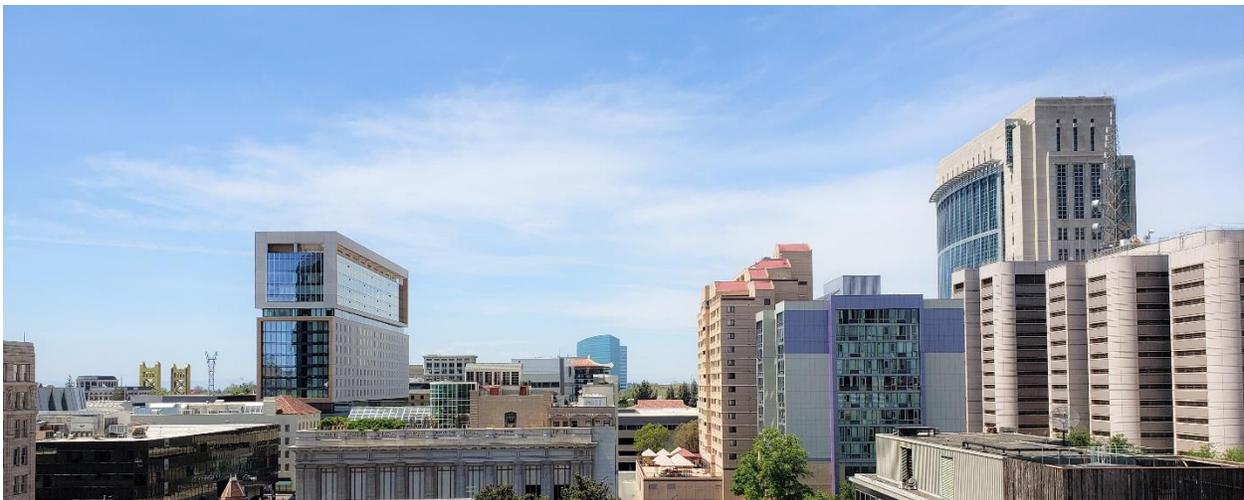
<sup>5</sup> Eric Morath, "Rank and File Workers Get Bigger Raises", Wall Street Journal, December 27, 2019, Derek Thompson, "The Best Economic News No One Wants to Talk About", The Atlantic, October 5, 2019.

<sup>6</sup> Sara Kimberlin & Esi Hutchful, "Income Inequality Significantly Increased for Californians", California Budget & Policy Center, Sacramento, California, September 2019, <https://calbudgetcenter.org/resources/income-inequality-significantly-increased-for-californians-in-2018/>

California’s public workforce system, beginning with the Manpower Development Training Act in 1962, has always been focused on low income workers and continues to be so today.<sup>7</sup>

Currently, the great majority of participants in the job training and job placement programs funded under the federal Workforce Innovation and Opportunity Act (WIOA) are unemployed or low-income incumbent workers. In addition, the great majority of participants are also enrolled in other training programs that the LWDBs help administer. For example, job training/placement for CalWORKS participants, Adult Basic Education participants, and/or Vocational Training participants—are almost exclusively low-income Californians, who often have other significant barriers to employment.

Job training and placement remains the core of the LWDBs missions. At the same time, the LWDBs have also been testing projects to impact job structure to improve wages and mobility for traditionally lower wage occupations.



Downtown Sacramento, California

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<sup>7</sup> Michael Bernick, [Job Training That Gets Results](#), Upjohn Institute, Michigan, 2005.

## PART II: CURRENT PROJECTS BY LWDBS THAT STRENGTHEN CALIFORNIA'S MIDDLE CLASS

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Below is an overview of five main categories of current LWDB projects that related to job structure and have a broad goal of strengthening California's middle class.

### 1. Pre-Apprenticeships and Apprenticeships in Non-Traditional Fields

Among the Building & Construction Trades in California, apprenticeship is a proven job training approach for placement and retention. A form of earn-and-learn training, an apprenticeship provides skills and a credential tied to on-going employment. In recent years, LWDBs and community colleges have been active in trying to expand the apprenticeship model into other sectors as a means of both improving wages in lower wage jobs and improving mobility.

On the state level, apprenticeship has found new life in California in the past decade: first under Governor Jerry Brown and the past year under current Governor Gavin Newsom. Newsom has heightened the apprenticeship role, setting a goal of 500,000 operating apprenticeships in the state by the year 2028. The California Labor and Workforce Development Agency has funded outreach efforts to increase employer knowledge of and participation in apprenticeships. Both the Agency and the California Community Colleges Chancellor's Office have funded individual pre-apprenticeship and apprenticeship projects.

Along with state-level activity, there is a good deal of activity and initiatives on the local level. For some years, the LWDBs in California have operated pre-apprenticeship programs tied to apprenticeship programs, with an emphasis on enrolling women and other under-represented groups in trade apprenticeships. More recently, LWDBs have been reaching out to employers on pre-apprenticeships and apprenticeship initiatives, aimed at fields such as information technology and health care where apprenticeships traditionally have not played a significant role.

Some of the local apprenticeship initiatives include the Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeships in Southern California, the Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships in the Inland Empire, and the Information Technology Apprenticeships in the Bay Area.

## A. Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeships, Bioscience Apprenticeships (Regional Workforce Development Board partnership in Southern California)

The Aerospace apprenticeships in Southern California are a partnership of the 7 Local Workforce Boards in the Los Angeles region along with the local community colleges and K-12 districts. These apprenticeships have been spearheaded by the **South Bay Workforce Investment Board (SBWIB)** and build on the long-term workforce connections that SBWIB has developed with the nearby Aerospace industry. South Bay is home to the Los Angeles Air Force Base, as well as a number of the state's main aerospace companies (Northrop Grumman, Lockheed Martin, Boeing, SpaceX) and their smaller supply-chain manufacturers.

SBWIB formed the **South Bay Manufacturing Industry Sector Partnership** in 2014. It started with a focus on pre-apprenticeship and has enrolled more than 100 pre-apprentices with Aerospace firms over the past five years. The Partnership coined the program "**Aero-Flex**" and added the Aerospace Engineering Apprenticeship in 2018, a registered apprenticeship with the US Department of Labor (DOL), as a means for longer-term training which would be more closely tied to ongoing employment. The Apprenticeship is tied to Aerospace engineering positions in manufacturing and research.

The first cohort of **17 Aerospace Engineering apprentices** started in 2018. All of these apprentices are still in the 18-month training process. Also, Aerospace-related apprenticeships have been registered by the Partnership. They are at the technician level rather than the engineer level, and these positions include Industrial Machine System Technician, CNC Machine Operator, Industrial Engineering Technician, Aerospace Electronics Technician, and Aerospace CNC Machining Technician.



*Picture 1: South Bay WIB's 24th Alumni Award recognizes Ragib Sakib for completing the Aero-Flex Pre-Apprenticeship Program.*

These Aerospace technician apprenticeships are envisioned as a career ladders pathway by utilizing community college training. The pathway includes the opportunity to obtain certifications in engineering for wage and occupational advancement, as well as path to obtaining an associate (AA) degree in engineering and/or a Bachelor of Engineering.

SBWIB—in collaboration with the **Los Angeles County Department of Workforce Development, Aging and Community Services (WDACS)**, educational institutions, and Bioscience employers—also has begun developing Pre-Apprenticeship and Registered Apprenticeship Career Pathways for the Bioscience sector. The program called **“Bio-Flex”** adopted the same flexible employer driven apprenticeship model used for Aero-Flex, but it was tailored to meet the needs of the Bioscience industry to attract new talent and increase job seekers’ access to well-paid careers in this sector. Each pre-apprentice/ apprentice obtains stackable credentials certifying attainment of

industry-recognized skills that are marketable and work-ready.

SBWIB graduated over **50 pre-apprentices in 2019** and recently submitted the Production Technician and Maintenance Technician Apprenticeship Occupation for approval by the DOL. Quality Control Analyst/Lab Technician and Lyophilizer Maintenance Engineer Apprenticeships will be submitted in the near future.

## **B. Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships (Regional Workforce Development Board partnership in the Inland Empire)**

The **Advanced Manufacturing Apprenticeships** in the Inland Empire are a partnership of the two LWDBs in the region, **San Bernardino** and **Riverside**, along with the local community colleges and K-12 districts. For these apprenticeships, the community colleges, under Norco College, took the lead in identifying and developing the apprenticeships. Both local boards served as conveners for their extensive employer contacts and in contributing funds for employer outreach and participation.

The first Advanced Manufacturing registered apprenticeship in 2017 was for **Industrial Maintenance Technicians**, and two others were soon added in the industrial maintenance field for **Mechatronics Technician** and **Industrial Engineering Technician**. These apprenticeships are two to four years in length. Among these three apprenticeship categories, 10 apprentices had completed their training

and 58 apprentices were still enrolled by the end of 2019.

The Inland Empire Partnership has developed **Industrial Production apprenticeships** for quality control, machine technician, and engineering technician. By the end of 2019, 48 apprentices were enrolled in Industrial Production apprenticeships.

The success of the Advanced Manufacturing Initiative has inspired the LWDBs, community colleges, and the K-12 school district to form the Inland Empire **LAUNCH partnership** to not only grow the Advanced Manufacturing apprenticeships but also add apprenticeships in the targeted industry sectors of **Culinary Arts** and **Health Care**. LAUNCH brings together funding from both the community colleges (**Strong Workforce, California Apprenticeship Initiative**) and from the LWDBs (“**Slingshot**” regional funds, formula WIOA funds).

### C. Information Technology Apprenticeships (Regional Workforce Board partnership in the Bay-Peninsula region)

In the San Francisco Bay Area, the four LWDBs have formed a regional Bay-Peninsula workforce partnership — San Francisco, NOVA, San Jose Work2Future, and San Benito — which launched **IT apprenticeships** with several Bay Area firms in 2018.

**Twilio** registered a software engineering apprenticeship in 2018, and as of the end of 2019, has graduated 27 apprentices with 9 apprentices currently enrolled. **Postmates** also has registered a software engineering apprenticeship, with one apprentice completing so far and two others currently enrolled.



*Picture 3: (left to right) Claire Sands helped with the apprenticeship program implementation at Postmates in San Francisco. Ramin Zandieh is Postmates' first apprentice. Jocelyne Umanzor and Eduardo Ramirez are IT apprentices.*

Beyond these, several tech firms have started or expanded apprenticeships

but not yet registered them. These include **LinkedIn**, which has climbed to near 40 apprentices in its software engineering apprenticeship, and **Twitter**, which is in the process of its first cohort of eight software engineering apprentices.



*Picture 4: TechSF and NOVA (North Valley) hosted a National Apprenticeship Week event at Twitter.*

The LWDBs have been the main organizing entity, reaching out to tech firms, advocating for the apprenticeship model, and working with these firms to structure the apprenticeships and curriculum. They also have provided funds for employer outreach through Regional WIOA "Slingshot" funds and formula WIOA funds, and in some cases, offset the costs of onboarding and of technical instruction incurred by the participating companies.

## 2. More Stable Scheduling Policies for Hourly Workers in the Service Sector

More stable scheduling for workers in the service sector has emerged as a political/legislative strategy nationwide and in California for the past few years, as a strategy for improving the wages of lower wage workers.

The state legislature has discussed stable scheduling, and two municipalities in California, Emeryville and San Francisco, have enacted legislation. In San Francisco, the **“Formula Retail Employees Rights Ordinances”**—enacted in 2015—regulate hours, notice of work schedules and predictability pay for schedule changes and on-call shifts. Employers must provide schedules two weeks in advance and provide “good faith written estimates” of the expected number of shifts per month and the days and hours of those shifts. In Emeryville, an ordinance—enacted in 2018—requires retail employers with at least 56 or more employees globally to give a “good faith estimate” of an employee’s work schedule at least 14 days in advance.

On the local level, several LWDBs have been exploring more stable scheduling for their local workforces. In San Diego, the San Diego Workforce Partnership began advocating for stable scheduling in 2019. It was spurred by focus group findings that retail workers prioritized more stable scheduling above even pay raises of up to \$1 per hour.

The Workforce Partnership built on the focus group findings to examine stable scheduling ordinances around the country and sought out the viewpoints of retail employers in San Diego. In Fall 2019, staff completed a white paper on the subject, **“The Benefits of Stable Scheduling for San Diego’s Service Sector.”** The paper proposed a Scheduling Law emphasizing five elements of Stability, Predictability, Reliability, Rest, and Opportunity. More specifically, they recommend that employers provide employees with seven-day schedules at least 14 days in advance and provide “predictability pay” for short term notice changes. They also recommend that employers offer any extra work hours to current part-time workers before hiring new workers.

Since Fall 2019, Workforce Partnership staff have been meeting with local elected officials, employers, and other stakeholder groups to share their recommendations and inform strategies to implement them. The discussion has already yielded some small impacts: one major hospitality employer has voluntarily moved forward to provide weekly schedules in advance.

### 3. Projects with Self-Sufficiency Wages for Training Providers to Obtain Workforce Funds

The **Self-Sufficiency Wage** is another political/legislative strategy that has been gaining momentum in California through advocacy spearheaded by organizations such as the Los Angeles Alliance for the New Economy, Economic Policy Institute and National Employment Law Center. These organizations throughout the nation and state have been advocating for policies that go beyond the minimum wage in improving the wages of lower wage jobs by taking into account regional cost of living and housing affordability.

On the local level, several LWDBs have taken up the strategy of requiring companies that receive on-the-job training (OJT) funds or other training funds to meet self-sufficiency wage levels tailored to the individual county. The Solano County WDB is one of these LWDBs.

In September 2018, the Solano WDB staff took the lead in drafting a "Self Sufficiency" Standard Policy with multiple goals:

1. Establish eligibility for WIOA training and placement assistance
2. Establish a wage goal for WIOA training and placement outcomes
3. Establish a wage minimum for employers receive OJT and other training funds.

In compiling its Standard, the WDB staff utilized the University of Washington self-sufficiency model (also utilized by the University of California Berkeley Labor Center). Staff calculated a base self-sufficiency wage for one adult in Solano County at \$13.43 an hour for a

**“This is indicative of larger conversations across the local system around balancing the Self-Sufficiency wage and its application with the jobs in demand in a region.”**

minimum of 30 hours per week (annualized equivalent of \$20,951).

A staff written policy was presented to the Solano Workforce Development Board, which launched a detailed analysis and review of self-sufficiency in Solano. The Board invited the Insight Center to make a presentation in the fall of 2018 and followed up with questions to staff on potential implementation approaches.

The Solano WDB is currently testing the Standard in its OJT policy. Traditionally, OJT funds—funds to subsidize employment for workers as they get up to speed in skills—has not been limited by the wage level. The new approach being tested restricts use of OJTs to instances in which the wage meets the Standard.

This is indicative of larger conversations across the local system around balancing the Self-Sufficiency wage and its application with the jobs in demand in a region. Home Health Aide is one of the largest growing occupation in Solano and yet has an average wage below \$12. This highlights the tension that may exist in a region between earning a self-sufficiency wage and serving local job demand within a region. Childcare is fast becoming another example of that.

#### 4. Protecting the Rights of Workers Utilizing On-Demand Labor Platforms and Assisting Them in Best Utilizing These Platforms

According to the UC Berkeley Labor Center, the use of on-demand labor platforms by California workers continued to increase in the past year—and has been the fastest growing part of California’s contingent economy.<sup>8</sup> The **transportation and delivery service platforms**, including Uber, Lyft, Postmates, Instacart and Doordash, have received the greatest media attention, but tens of other major platforms are being used by California workers, including TaskRabbit, Handy, Wonolo, Thumbtack, and SnagaJob.

Research on the use of the on-demand labor platforms has shown that the great majority of California workers are using these platforms as a supplement to other income sources.<sup>9</sup> Uber reports that over 80% of their drivers drive for Uber as a supplement to other income sources. Lyft reports a similar high use of the labor platform to subsidize income. Other on-demand platforms, outside of transportation, report that nearly 40% of their workers utilize the platforms as income supplements.

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<sup>8</sup> Annette Bernhardt, “What is the Gig Economy: Understanding Independent Contracting and Gig Work in California”, UC Berkeley Labor Center & California Policy Lab, Berkeley, California, October 1, 2019. See also, Annette Bernhardt and Sarah Thompson, “What Do We Know About Gig Work in California?”, UC Berkeley Labor Center, June 2017; Brett Collins, Andrew Garin, “Is Gig Work Replacing Traditional Employment?”, U.S. Internal Revenue Service, Washington D.C., March 2019.

<sup>9</sup> Diana Farrell, Fiona Greig, Amar Hamoudi, “Bridging the Gap”, JP Morgan Chase & Co, Institute, New York, New York, October 2019.

The ruling of *Dynamex Operations West, Inc. V. Superior Court of Los Angeles* galvanized California's discussion around worker misclassification and the gig economy. Over the past year, California economists have analyzed and debated hourly wage levels and income stability of workers utilizing the on-demand platforms. Worker advocacy groups have challenged technology platforms as shortchanging workers in pay owed and misclassifying workers who should be employees.

Prior to the passage of AB 5, a number of the LWDBs in California have launched efforts in the past two years to assist California workers in navigating the world of on-demand work to disrupt traditional models of supply and demand by adding greater agency and flexibility for the worker engaged on such a platform.

The **Pacific Gateway WDB**, serving the Long Beach area, has been most active in this area. Launched in 2015, the WDB's labor market analysis--spurred by the closure of Boeing's manufacturing facility in Long Beach—took a close look at work in the city and found a growing number of residents, by choice or necessity, working multiple part-time jobs and sometimes turning to the on-demand platforms to get additional work.

Over the next few years, Pacific Gateway received a series of grants from the Annie E. Casey foundation, Kauffman Foundation, Wells Fargo Foundation, Walmart Foundation, and most recently Irvine Foundation to **design** and **build** a new on-demand labor platform for California's public workforce system. The project, which came to be called "**Elevating**

**"...a number of the LWDBs in California have launched efforts in the past two years to assist California workers in navigating the world of on-demand work..."**

**California’s Irregular Workforce”** is a form of CalJOBS for the irregular economy by vetting employers and ensuring that workers are properly classified as employees (part-time) and receive wages earned.

Project leaders expanding into LA County have been undertaking outreach to employers as well as identifying potential workers and synthesizing a central element, **“The Central Database of Available Hours”** that is critical to the success of a more balanced gig economy. The program will provide any worker in Los Angeles County access at no cost to the database of work opportunities in sectors relevant to their skills and scheduling availabilities. They will be linked to work opportunities and the wages offered, and they can decide to accept or reject opportunities.

For employers, the platform offers the opportunity to have workers vetted with clearly defined time availability. The Pacific Gateway WDB envisions that employers will develop their own pools of local workers who they can call in as needed; also, workers can achieve stability with more work opportunities in the irregular economy.

While the project has not yet rolled out publicly, it has attracted state and national attention such as being recognized in 2019 by the U.S. Conference of Mayors as one of the best job and economic development initiatives in the United States.

## 5. Projects to Professionalize and Impact Wages and Mobility in Traditionally Lower-Wage Occupations (i.e. Early Childhood Education, Long Term Care and Community Healthcare)

Early childhood education, long term care, and community healthcare fields propose a unique challenge in California: these industries are projected to have a growing need for direct service workers in the near future, yet wages and benefits are currently low in many of the direct service jobs. Several LWDBs have been undertaking projects in partnership with individual industries to professionalize these jobs by adding certifications and professional metrics to improve wages and mobility of the workers.

In Early Childhood Education, **SEIU's Early Childhood Education Center** and the recently-established **Early Care and Education Pathways to Success (ECEPTS)** program have been active in a range of training and placement activities such as setting up Early Childhood Education apprenticeships. LWDBs have been involved with a number of these efforts, along with others undertaken with the community colleges.



*Picture 5: Oakland youths participated in the 2019 Summer Youth Employment Program (YEP) to gain skills and experiences.*

The Oakland LWDB is partnering with Merritt Community College on an Early Childhood Education Training program focused on the Head Start programs. The Merritt program targets parents of Head Start students.

The Oakland LWDB approaches provide traditional job training and placement, and parents who complete training will be hired as City of Oakland employees in the Head Start program. However, they also are an attempt at a new model of wages and mobility in this occupation. The current Merritt program provides several certifications, which centered on the Associate Teacher Credential. It also has built in a career path for participants to obtain AA degrees in the field. The Early Childhood Education Apprenticeship builds in a schedule of wage increases during the apprenticeship. More importantly, the certifications and competencies measured are envisioned to justify wage increases and also to assist workers to advance to other supervisor and teaching positions.



*Picture 6: Oakland's Summer YEP provided opportunities for youth to learn about baby's development and newborn care.*

Similarly, in the long-term care field, LWDBs are examining ways not only to meet the industry needs for operations and care workers but also to professionalize these jobs, especially the direct care positions. In recent years, the **Sacramento Employment and Training Agency (SETA)** has partnered with the region's long-term care employers to help them fill their workforce needs, especially for the **Certified Nurse Assistant (CNA)** which is a main direct care position of high-demand. SETA has sought pathways for CNAs to advance to positions of higher pay and responsibility.

SETA also has been active in developing the position of community health worker into career pathways. Community health worker is a relatively new position in healthcare, but it is rapidly expanding with evolving healthcare models. The community health worker is a liaison between the local community—often a lower income community—and the health care system, providing information and advice to community members on healthcare

options. SETA is part of a **Sacramento Community Health Care Program**—a collaboration of Sierra Health Foundation, the Greater Sacramento Urban League, local health care employers and local community colleges—that includes a community health worker training track by involving workers starting as community health workers and advancing to other administrative or direct care positions within a few years.

A new community health care apprenticeship is being developed by the Monterey County LWDB in concert with local community colleges in the Central Coast region. The Monterey LWDB is part of a **Central Coast Regional Community Health Worker Training Initiative** which is a two-year project with the University of California, San Francisco (UCSF) Healthforce Center. The Initiative is bringing together Central Coast employers and clinics/hospitals, to develop a system of certifications and advancement pathways by starting with the entry positions including Community Health Worker.

## **PART III: PARTNERSHIPS IN 2020-2021 WITH LWDBS AND STATE GOVERNMENT IN “STRENGTHENING CALIFORNIA’S MIDDLE CLASS”**

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One of the greatest strengths of the local workforce system comes from the ability to gather around shared goals and best practices and to share lessons learned from past and current projects such as those mentioned above. Through this series of Policy Alerts, CWA seeks to increase the statewide awareness of such programs and partnerships around this broad goal of “strengthening California’s middle class” and finding ways to support such programs’ continued success at the local and statewide levels by collaborating with the Governor and the Legislature. The State’s Government and LWDBs can expand and improve program outcomes for low-wage workers by drawing upon core components of successful programs outlined above. To reiterate, those tenets are the following:

### **Successful LWDB Projects for Strengthening California’s Middle Class incorporate Pre-Apprenticeship and Apprenticeship training:**

Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship models are proven methods for achieving greater gender and racial diversity in both training programs and occupational fields. LWDB programs that refer and support jobseekers in registered Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship would assist learners by getting paid rather than ‘paying to learn’, while individuals attain valuable skills and credentials as they transition into family-sustaining careers. As a training model, the Governor and the Legislature should continue to look for ways to sustain and support Apprenticeship and Pre-Apprenticeship.

### **Successful LWDB Projects for Strengthening California’s Middle Class incorporate Flexibility and worker voice into their program design:**

California’s LWDBs have a history of serving as incubators for State-initiated pilot projects and working closely with the California Workforce Development Board (CWDB) and Labor and Workforce Agency (Labor Agency) on implementing initiatives such as Breaking Barriers, Prison to Employment, SB-1 Transportation Pre-Apprenticeships/Apprenticeships, and the Workforce Accelerator Fund pilot programs. In each case, successful projects that LWDBs run for low-wage workers not only focus on providing individuals and families with the benefits of higher paying job but also cultivate greater self-determination and agency for the worker in question. Through scheduling predictability or scheduling flexibility (determined on the worker’s terms) or union representation and partnership, the State of California should use LWDB programs as a model to scale innovative programs like those mentioned here to ensure the voice of the worker is heard loud and clear in projects designed to lift workers out of poverty.

**Successful LWDB Projects for Strengthening California’s Middle Class incorporate LWDBs as a trusted convener of local and regional stakeholders:**

The five projects noted in the sections above are only a fraction of the LWDB portfolio around specific industries and individual employers. In each case, LWDBs successfully serve as industry conveners by acting as a trusted intermediary between training providers, employers, industry associations, organized labor, and jobseekers. By utilizing these pre-established connections between partners, local success can be ascertained and scaled rapidly in a particular sector. To that end, State-driven projects around regional or industry collaboration should utilize LWDBs as trusted intermediaries in connecting workers to employment.

Finally, while some of these projects are still in their early stages, they can benefit from on-going review and input by the State Legislature, Governor’s Office and the Labor and Workforce Development Agency. The collaboration may take the form of monthly updates and/or an ongoing workgroup of LWDBs and state government staff.